

The New KEXP Offers Music That Matters to Everyone - ParentMap

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The New KEXP Offers Music That Matters to Everyone

With daily tours and open recording sessions, KEXP's new space, opening April 16 at Seattle Center, is a music-loving family's best friend

By Emma Alexander



KEXP opens its doors on April 16 at its new location at Seattle Center (472 First Ave. N., Seattle). Photo credit: Kari Taylor

Local, independent radio station KEXP not only expanded its square footage with its recent move to Seattle Center, it expanded the very definition of community radio. For the first time, the homegrown favorite will be open to the public, offering daily tours, open recording sessions and more perks to music-loving families and fans.

Details are still in the works for future community partnerships and family-friendly activities — much depends on the ongoing capital campaign, says KEXP annual giving and events coordinator Tilly Rodina — but one event is already on the books: the (free!) grand opening from noon to 9 p.m. Saturday, April 16.



Visitors look in on the KEXP DJ booth from the Gathering Space. Photo credit: Kari Taylor.

KEXP grand opening highlights

First, location: KEXP's new digs are at 472 First Ave., at the corner of First and Republican, near (appropriately) the Vera Project and the SIFF Film Center.

The grand opening schedule on April 16 is packed with all-ages fun. Here are highlights:

- Expect (of course) live music. Groups including Bob Mould, Hey Marseilles, Samaris and more will perform inside KEXP and in the courtyard outside the HQ's giant garage doors.
- The courtyard will feature food trucks and a beer garden (with ID). Keep an eye out for Teatro ZinZanni contortionist and hula-hoop artist Vita Radionova (2 p.m.) with free tours every 15 minutes.
- Neighboring all-ages arts venue The Vera Project will also host family-friendly shows while next door, the SIFF Film Center will screen Seattle music videos. At 8 p.m., Pacific Science Center will host a laser light show with KEXP DJ RZ.

installation in an unfinished part of the KEXP building; "Inside the Music of KEXP" is a room-sized sculpture hung with what looks like mesh fabric. Visitors can touch the fabric, wired with Microsoft's Kinect technology, and "remix" songs. You've got to see it to believe it.

• For snacks, La Marzocco café will be open for business in the Gathering Space ("lobby" doesn't do it justice) while Molly Moon's will be selling a special "Cheryl Waters Middae Sundae" (vanilla ice cream hot fudge, candied hazelnuts, whipped cream and a cherry — hungry yet?). Theo Chocolate got in on the sweet action, too; pick up their limited edition KEXP Sound Bar.

KEXP any day: Open recording sessions, tours and more

Following the grand opening, you can still get a peek at what's going on at KEXP any day of the week.

Free tours and open viewing of the DJ booth: Free tours will start daily at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., and the couch-strewn Gathering Space will be open to the public. Beside La Marzocco, the Gathering Space's main attraction is direct access to the inside workings of KEXP. Two windows look into the DJ booth where you can see the music you're hearing.

Open recording sessions: And let's not forget the viewing room. Following April 16, KEXP is opening its performance recording sessions — nearly 500 a year — to the public as free,

Fun KEXP fact

KEXP isn't cool just for local families. Touring artists will find kid-friendly digs backstage, too. The green room features new TVs to keep tiny tots entertained while Mom and Dad shred on-air. Also backstage: showers,

all-ages shows. The sessions, which generally last 20 to 40 minutes, are scheduled at all times of day and night, but most frequently at noon. Check [the schedule](#), then show up day of the show to get on the viewing list (about 70 people can fit in the viewing room).

Now, instead of paying for tickets and a babysitter, parents can bring their kids with them to see all their favorite local and touring acts. Just look at some of [the in-studio performances](#) KEXP hosted in the weeks leading up to April 16.

KEXP: the easiest outing your family could ask for.

If you go ...

What: KEXP Grand Opening, 472 First Ave. N., Seattle

When: Saturday, April 16, noon–9 p.m.

Details: Check out the [schedule of events](#)

Upcoming: Another upcoming family event is the Kids Dance Party on Father's Day, June 19. Check [the KEXP events calendar](#) for details.

Note: Teens are welcome to volunteer at the event; duties include working as a DJ's assistant and manning the music library.
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